

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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### CONYERS CALLS ILLINOIS TELECOM LEGISLATION AN NATIONAL EMBARRASSMENT TO DEMOCRATS

Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich), the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee - a committee which has jurisdiction over telecommunications, administrative law and federal-state relationships - today issued the following statement regarding Illinois SB 885, which was passed the Illinois legislature and then signed in a process that required less than four days.

"Passage of SB 885 is a national embarrassment to Democrats. The Democratic Party is supposed to stand for consumers, for small businesses, and for a level playing field. But, in smoke-filled backrooms, with waft of lobby dollars thick in the air, key Democrats seemed to throw these traditional principles overboard, and with them millions of consumers who are now going to be paying higher telephone bills. Democrats cannot win elections by standing for this type of special interest politics.

"As one of the principle authors of the 1996 Telecom Act, and as Ranking Democrat of the Committee which has jurisdiction over federal preemption matters, there is little doubt in my mind that the law will be overturned.

"The 1996 Act called on the Federal Communications Commission to set a general framework that state regulatory agencies must observe as a floor for competition. The Illinois law is the legislative equivalent of succession on that key national policy. It countermands national policy, not just cutting out of the process the states' best experts - the state regulators - but also by effectively repealing the federal legal criteria that must be observed in setting wholesale prices. Such efforts by local governments to exempt itself from key national policies have failed in other contexts and are likely to fail here."

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